

## PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

## PCT

## INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

(PCT Article 36 and Rule 70)

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Applicant's or agent's file reference 886-003C1	<b>FOR FURTHER ACTION</b> See Notification of Transmittal of International Preliminary Examination Report (Form PCT/IPEA/416)	
International application No. PCT/US01/02366	International filing date (day/month/year) 24 January 2001 (24.01.2001)	Priority date (day/month/year) 31 January 2000 (31.01.2000)
International Patent Classification (IPC) or national classification and IPC IPC(7): H04M 7/00 and US Cl.: 379/223,219		
Applicant INFONXX, INC.		
Technology Center 2600		

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1. This international preliminary examination report has been prepared by this International Preliminary Examining Authority and is transmitted to the applicant according to Article 36.

2. This REPORT consists of a total of 6 sheets, including this cover sheet.

☒ This report is also accompanied by ANNEXES, i.e., sheets of the description, claims and/or drawings which have been amended and are the basis for this report and/or sheets containing rectifications made before this Authority (see Rule 70.16 and Section 607 of the Administrative Instructions under the PCT).

These annexes consist of a total of 4 sheets.

3. This report contains indications relating to the following items:

- I ☒ Basis of the report
- II ☐ Priority
- III ☐ Non-establishment of report with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability
- IV ☐ Lack of unity of invention
- V ☒ Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement
- VI ☐ Certain documents cited
- VII ☐ Certain defects in the international application
- VIII ☐ Certain observations on the international application

Date of submission of the demand 30 August 2001 (30.08.2001)	Date of completion of this report 03 September 2002 (03.09.2002)
Name and mailing address of the IPEA/US Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks Box PCT Washington, D.C. 20231 Facsimile No. (703)305-3230	Authorized officer David Escalante Telephone No. 703-306-0377

## INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US01/02366

**I. Basis of the report****1. With regard to the elements of the international application:\***

- ☐ the international application as originally filed.
- ☒ the description:  
pages 1-42,44-58 as originally filed  
pages NONE, filed with the demand  
pages 43, filed with the letter of 25 October 2001 (25.10.2001)
- ☒ the claims:  
pages NONE, as originally filed  
pages NONE, as amended (together with any statement) under Article 19  
pages NONE, filed with the demand  
pages 59-98, filed with the letter of 26 March 2002 (26.03.2002)
- ☒ the drawings:  
pages 1-20, as originally filed  
pages NONE, filed with the demand  
pages NONE, filed with the letter of \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ the sequence listing part of the description:  
pages NONE, as originally filed  
pages NONE, filed with the demand  
pages NONE, filed with the letter of \_\_\_\_\_

**2. With regard to the language, all the elements marked above were available or furnished to this Authority in the language in which the international application was filed, unless otherwise indicated under this item.**

These elements were available or furnished to this Authority in the following language \_\_\_\_\_ which is:

- ☐ the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of international search (under Rule 23.1(b)).
- ☐ the language of publication of the international application (under Rule 48.3(b)).
- ☐ the language of the translation furnished for the purposes of international preliminary examination (under Rules 55.2 and/or 55.3).

**3. With regard to any nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence disclosed in the international application, the international preliminary examination was carried out on the basis of the sequence listing:**

- ☐ contained in the international application in printed form.
- ☐ filed together with the international application in computer readable form.
- ☐ furnished subsequently to this Authority in written form.
- ☐ furnished subsequently to this Authority in computer readable form.
- ☐ The statement that the subsequently furnished written sequence listing does not go beyond the disclosure in the international application as filed has been furnished.
- ☐ The statement that the information recorded in computer readable form is identical to the written sequence listing has been furnished.

**4. ☐ The amendments have resulted in the cancellation of:**

- ☒ the description, pages NONE
- ☒ the claims, Nos. 29-31, 58, 64, 68, 109, 128-132 and 164
- ☒ the drawings, sheets/fig NONE

**5. ☐ This report has been established as if (some of) the amendments had not been made, since they have been considered to go beyond the disclosure as filed, as indicated in the Supplemental Box (Rule 70.2(c)).\*\***

\* Replacement sheets which have been furnished to the receiving Office in response to an invitation under Article 14 are referred to in this report as "originally filed" and are not annexed to this report since they do not contain amendments (Rules 70.16 and 70.17).

\*\* Any replacement sheet containing such amendments must be referred to under item 1 and annexed to this report.

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**V. Reasoned statement under Rule 66.2(a)(ii) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement**

**1. STATEMENT**

Novelty (N)	Claims <u>Please See Continuation Sheet</u>	YES
	Claims <u>Please See Continuation Sheet</u>	NO
Inventive Step (IS)	Claims <u>Please See Continuation Sheet</u>	YES
	Claims <u>Please See Continuation Sheet</u>	NO
Industrial Applicability (IA)	Claims <u>Please See Continuation Sheet</u>	YES
	Claims <u>Please See Continuation Sheet</u>	NO

**2. CITATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS**

Please See Continuation Sheet

**INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT**International application No.  
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(To be used when the space in any of the preceding boxes is not sufficient)

**V.1. Reasoned Statements:**

The opinion as to Novelty was positive (Yes) with respect to claims 2-19, 21-28, 32-37, 39-57, 59-63, 65-67, 69-108, 110-127, 133-153, 155, 157, 159-163, 165, 168-172

The opinion as to Novelty was negative (No) with respect to claims 1, 20, 38, 154, 156, 158, 166, 167

The opinion as to Inventive Step was positive (Yes) with respect to claims 21-28, 32, 37, 50-57, 59-63, 65-67, 69-88, 90-108, 110-116, 133-153, 155, 157, 159-161, 165, 170-172

The opinion as to Inventive Step was negative (NO) with respect to claims 1-20, 33-36, 38-49, 117-127, 154, 156, 158, 166-169

The opinion as to Industrial Applicability was positive (YES) with respect to claims 1-172

The opinion as to Industrial Applicability was negative (NO) with respect to claims NONE

**V. 2. Citations and Explanations:**

1. Claims 1, 20, 38, 154, 156, 158, 166 and 167 lack novelty under PCT Article 33(2) as being anticipated by Herrero Garcia US Patent 5,479,491.

*Regarding claims 1, 38, 154, 156, 158, 166 and 167*, Herrero Garcia teaches of a communication assistance system for providing access to information corresponding to a plurality of subscribers (abstract), the system comprising:

a telephone switch (digital telephone switch 200) for receiving calls from a plurality of requesters (callers) desiring to access said information corresponding to subscribers, (abstract, col. 6, lines 11-39);

a first database (mass storage 418) configured to store said information corresponding to each of said subscribers (col. 14, lines 18-32), including phone numbers of each of said subscribers (col. 7, lines 24-31; col. 9, lines 19-40); and

a closing prompt module coupled to said first database (418) so as to select a closing prompt code from a plurality of available prompt codes each of said closing prompt codes associated with a desired closing prompt message so as to provide a selected closing prompt message, wherein anyone of the available closing prompt messages is provided to a requester (step 806 - fig. 6A; the system of Herrero Garcia can play a plurality of different messages to the caller according to the callers choice or depending on what number they are calling);

a voice response unit (300, 400, fig. 1) coupled to said first database (418) configured to retrieve information from said first database in response to voice commands received from said requesters, (col. 10, lines 1-7, 35-44);

a dial string translator configured to receive dial strings dialed by said plurality of requesters (user dial y4 in step 806 in figure 6A) and translate said received dial strings to a corresponding digit sequence associated with a service provided by said communication assistance system, (the VMS dials the application code number for the dialed string, step 810 in figure 6A); and

a database (mass storage 418) containing a plurality of access numbers corresponding to phone listing of each of said subscribers, so as to provide an assigned access number to a requester who is requesting a subscriber's telephone number, (col. 14, lines 18-32, col. 6, lines 32-39; the yellow pages will provide the requests with telephone numbers).

*Regarding claim 20*, Herrero Garcia teaches of a closing prompt storage module coupled to said closing prompt module and configured to store a plurality of closing prompt messages each of which is associated with a closing prompt code provided by said closing prompt module, (fig. 6A).

2. Claims 2-19, 39-49, 117-127, 162-163, 168 and 169 lack an inventive step under PCT Article 33(3) as being obvious over Herrero Garcia in view of Cox US Patent 5,943,417.

*Regarding claims 2-7, 39-42, 168 and 169*, Herrero Garcia further teaches of a call center coupled to said switch for routing each of said received calls from said requester to an operator terminal which is operated by a customer representative (human operator

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426b, fig. 1; col. 4, lines 33-44; col. 14, lines 33-39) to retrieve information store in said first database, (418, fig. 1).

Herrero Garcia does not specifically teach of the closing prompt message being in accordance with WAP or SMS or of having a listing database that comprises a wireless phone number.

Cox inherently teaches wherein a closing prompt messages are in accordance with a text from a list of formats including WAP and SMS since Cox allows for wireless access to the system, col. 1, lines 25-30; col. 4, lines 59-63. Cox also teaches wherein a requester's call to a subscriber is routed back to one of said operator terminal in the event said requester's call to a subscriber is not completed, (col. 7, lines 26-53).

Cox also teaches of wherein said database comprises a listing database with each of said subscribers which comprises a wireless phone number field adapted for wireless phone numbers of said subscribers, (col. 7, lines 26-30). Cox also teaches of a second database (26) comprising personal contact listings of each of one of said subscribers, (fig. 1; col. 5, lines 25-39).

The Examiner also notes that they system of Herrero Garcia and Cox is not limited to a single form of contact e.g., landline or wireless. The system stores a subscriber number in a listing database and does not prevent e.g. a wireless number from not being stored. Therefore wireless subscribers can easily use the system of Herrero Garcia for their contact number.

Therefore, it would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to make the system available to wireless users as taught by Cox so that the system can be accessed by cellular subscribers who want to use directory assistance.

*Regarding claims 8-19*, Herrero in view of Cox teaches the listing table further comprises a Special Announcement field (step 802 fig. 7A) and a General announcement field (step 854 fig. 7A) adapted to store a closing prompt code associated with a Special Announcement closing prompt and a General announcement field that said subscriber desires to provide to each one of said requesters, (then announcements are stored in mass storage). Herrero Garcia teaches the listing table is searchable and that the Special and General announcement is an audio message that represents services that are offered by the subscriber, (col. 18, lines 30-67).

*Regarding claims 43-49*, Herrero Garcia teaches wherein a dial string translator generates a digital string within said digit sequence to be utilized by said system when communicating with said requester, (In step 808, fig. 6A).

Herrero Garcia also teaches the call information record further comprises a number dialed by requester field to store the number dial by each one of said requesters (fig. 6A) wherein the call record further comprises an originating phone number of requester field to store the number from which each one of said requester has dialed. Herrero Garcia further teaches of a plurality of call centers capable of routing calls to each other, (col. 9, lines 41-45; Earth link 208 provides access to other call centers).

Herrero Garcia does not specifically teach of conversing with the caller in a specific language.

Cox teaches the call center routes the call to an operator who is capable of conversing in said specific language, (col. 19, lines 10-20).

Therefore, it would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have a system which is capable of conversing with clients in a plurality of languages as taught by Cox so that the system can be used by callers from around the world since there will not be a language barrier that prevents them from understanding the prompts in the system.

*Regarding claim 122,163,117,162*, Herrero Garcia teaches of a system that provides access to information corresponding to a plurality of subscribers as taught above. Herrero Garcia further teaches of a telephone switch for receiving calls from a plurality of requesting desiring to access information corresponding to subscriber as applied above.

Herrero Garcia does not specifically teach of a billing system.

Cox teaches a billing system for a communication system that provides access to information corresponding to a plurality of subscribers (col. 17, lines 55-67), the system comprising:

a telephone switch (PBX) for receiving calls from a plurality of requesters desiring to access said information corresponding to subscribers (fig. 1) wherein said switch is configured to generate an incoming call information record containing a Feature Code field associated with a rate plan corresponding to service provider rates for each one of said requesters, (col. 17, lines 55-67);

Therefore, it would have been obvious to use the teaching of billing to have a database directory listing (20) storing information corresponding to each one of said subscribers including their phone number, said information including a Rate Plan filed associated with billing rates corresponding to each one of said subscribers, (col. 17, lines 55-67); and

a database (26) configured to store said information corresponding to each of said subscribers, including phone numbers of each of said subscribers, (col. 5, lines 25-29, Cox); and

a billing record database (20) coupled to said switch configured to store information corresponding to amount of time requester was connected to each one of said subscribers, col. 17, lines 55-col. 18, line 8, Cox).

Therefore, it would have been obvious for one of ordinary skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the system of Herrero Garcia by providing a billing system as taught by Cox so that the system of Herrero Garcia will have a means to generate revenue so that the system can provide the services to the caller and will still be able to run efficiently.

*Regarding claims 123-127*, Herrero Garcia teaches of a call center coupled to said switch (PBX) for routing each of said received calls from said requester to an operator terminal which is operated by a customer representative (426b, fig. 1) so as to retrieve information stored in said database (418), (fig. 1);

a dial string translator configured to receive dial strings dialed by said plurality of requesters (user dial y4 in step 806 in figure 6A) and translate said received dial strings to a corresponding digit sequence associated with a service provided by said communication assistance system, (the VMS dials the application code number for the dialed string, step 810 in figure 6A);

a database directory listing storing information corresponding to each one of said subscribers including their phone numbers,

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said information including a Special Services associated with services provided by said subscriber, so as to allow a search of said database against any one of said services, (col. 18, lines 30-67, fig. 6A, fig. 7A); and

a telephone switch (200) for receiving calls from a plurality of requester desiring to access said information corresponding to subscribers, (col. 6, lines 11-39).

Herrero Garcia in view of Cox as applied above, teaches the call center further comprises and automated operator terminal (30) and a billing record database (26) which is coupled to said operator terminal (20) and wherein the billing record comprises information corresponding to each service provider, (col. 17, lines 55-67); and

a Rate Plan field associated with billing rates corresponding to each one of said subscribers, (col. 17, lines 55-67).

As applied above, it would have been obvious to use a billing system in the system of Herrero Garcia.

**Regarding claims 118-121**, Herrero Garcia in view of Cox as applied above further teaches of a call center coupled to said switch for routing each of said received calls from said requester to an operator terminal which is operated by a customer representative so as to retrieve information stored in said database, (fig. 1). The call center further comprises and automated operator terminal (abstract).

Cox teaches the special service include indication that the service is open 24 hours and provides Spanish speaking personnel, (col. 19, lines 10-20). The database directory listing further comprises a Billing Information field that contains instructions associated with whether a request or a subscriber is responsible for the billing on calls made by a requester to a subscriber, (col. 17, line 55 - col. 18, line 9).

Therefore, it would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have Spanish speaking personal as taught by Cox so that so that the system can be used by callers from Spanish speaking areas and so that there will not be a language barrier that prevents them from calling because of only e.g., English prompts in the system.

3. Claims 21-28, 32, 37, 50-57, 59-63, 65-67, 69-88, 90-108, 110-116, 133-153, 157, 159-161, 165 and 170-172 meet the criteria set out in PCT Article 33(2)-(4), because the prior art does not teach or fairly suggest of an override module generating closing prompt codes corresponding to announcements provided by administrators and wherein the closing prompt generates a call completion data packet which comprises and originating phone number and the telephone number of the subscriber and a synchronization means coupled to the clean-up database unit and receiving modification through the Internet and of rewarding the subscriber who modify their information and of a pre-announcement field which contains instruction information as to whether a subscriber requires to be notified of a requester's identification before competing a call and of sending notification messages via instant messaging and live chat.

## ----- NEW CITATIONS -----

NONE

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6 wishes a calling party to be "pre-announced" to them. If the subscriber of Wireless Apparatus 6 chooses that the calling party be pre-announced, then this pre-announcement provides an opportunity to accept or reject the inbound call. The pre-announcement feature is available to Wireless Apparatuses 6 on inbound calls from both wireless and wireline Requesters 4. Inbound calls for wireless subscriber 6 are defaulted to pre-announce "on" and inbound calls for wireline subscribers 6 are defaulted to pre-announce "off"; however, any subscriber and/or System 2 provider can decide to change this setting at any time. If the pre-announcement feature is "off" System 2 proceeds to step 124A, if pre-announcement feature is "on" then system proceeds to step 120.

Next, at step 120, System 2 consults the Pre-announcement field 59 of Call Completion Data Packet 50, to determine the method of transmitting the pre-announcement. The pre-announcement can be either in text or voice format. Using the fields in Call Completion Data Packet 50, System 2 determines what format is available based on the carrier and the device capabilities of Wireless Apparatus 6. If in voice format, Switch 12 and/or an integrated Voice Response Unit (VRU) will prompt Requester 4 to state his/her name. After recording Requester 4, Switch 12 and/or the VRU replays the voice to the subscriber of Wireless Apparatus 6. It is contemplated by this invention that this same voice message of Requester 4's name can be converted to a text message and be delivered to the subscriber as described below using text pre-announcements. If the pre-announcement is in text format Switch 12 transmits the originating number of Requester 4 to Wireless Apparatus 6, or alternatively sends more complete information on Requester 4 provided it is available to System 2. Text messaging can be sent in WAP (Wireless Application Protocol) or any other protocol which is sufficient to transmit the necessary information and is supported by the Service Provider 26 of Wireless Apparatus 6.

At step 122, if the Wireless Apparatus 6 indicates acceptance of the inbound call, then see step 124A below. If the call is not accepted, see step 124B.

At step 124A, in the case where the Wireless Apparatus 6 wishes to accept the inbound communication request, Wireless Apparatus 6 indicates acceptance via

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WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A communication assistance system (2) for providing access to information corresponding to a plurality of subscribers (6), the system comprising:
  - a telephone switch (12) for receiving calls from a plurality of requesters (4) desiring to access said information corresponding to subscribers (6);
  - a first database (18) configured to store said information corresponding to each of said subscribers (6), including phone numbers of each of said subscribers; and
  - a closing prompt module (27) coupled to said first database so as to select a closing prompt code from a plurality of available closing prompt codes each of said closing prompt codes associated with a desired closing prompt message so as to provide a selected closing prompt message, wherein anyone of the available closing prompt messages is provided to a requester(4).
2. The system according to claim 1, wherein said closing prompt messages are in accordance with a text format from a list of formats including WAP and SMS.
3. The system in accordance with claim 1, further comprising a call center(16) coupled to said switch (12) for routing each of said received calls from said requester to an operator terminal (20).



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4. The system in accordance with claim 1, further comprising an operator terminal (20) operated by a customer representative to retrieve information stored in said first database (18).
5. The system in accordance with claim 1, further comprising an automated operator terminal (20) so as to automatically retrieve information stored in said first database (18).
6. The system in accordance with claim 3, wherein a requester's (4) call to a subscriber (6) is routed back to one of said operator terminals in the event said requester's call to a subscriber is not completed.
7. The system in accordance with claim 1, wherein said database comprises a listing table (52A) associated with each of said subscribers, said listing table further comprises a wireless phone number field adapted for wireless phone numbers of said subscribers.
8. The system in accordance with claim 1, wherein said database comprises a listing table (52A) associated with each of said subscribers, said listing table further comprises a Special Announcement field adapted to store a closing prompt code associated with a Special Announcement closing prompt that said subscriber desires to provide to each one of said requesters.

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9. The system in accordance with claim 8, wherein said listing table further comprises a General announcement field adapted to store a closing prompt code associated with a General Announcement closing prompt intended to be provided to said requesters.

10. The system in accordance with claim 8, wherein said listing table is searchable.

11. The system in accordance with claim 8, wherein said Special Announcement represents a recorded message associated with said subscriber.

12. The system in accordance with claim 9, wherein said General Announcement represents a recorded message associated with type of service said subscriber provides.

13. The system in accordance with claim 8, wherein said Special Announcement represents marketing messages corresponding to services offered by said subscribers.

14. The system in accordance with claim 8, wherein said Special Announcement closing prompt is an audio message.

15. The system in accordance with claim 8, wherein said Special

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Announcement closing prompt is a multimedia message.

16. The system in accordance with claim 8, wherein said Special Announcement represents information corresponding to additional services provided relating to said subscriber.

17. The system in accordance with claim 16, wherein said subscriber is a goods or service provider and said Special Announcement corresponds to an invitation to a requester to order said goods or services.

18. The system in accordance with claim 17, wherein said goods are tickets to an event, including movies.

19. The system in accordance with claim 17, wherein said subscriber is a restaurant and said Special Announcement is invitation to make reservations to said restaurant.

20. The system in accordance with claim 1, further comprising a closing prompt storage module (13) coupled to said closing prompt module and configured to store a plurality of closing prompt messages each of which is associated with a closing prompt code provided by said closing prompt module (13).

21. The system in accordance with claim 20, further comprising an override

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module (66) coupled to said closing prompt module, said override module generating closing prompt codes corresponding to announcements provided by administrators of said communications assistance system.

22. The system in accordance with claim 21, wherein said announcements provided by administrators of said communications assistance system comprises cross-selling announcements relating to other features and services provided by said communications assistance system.

23. The system in accordance with claim 20, wherein said closing prompt module generates a call completion data packet (50) to be transmitted to said telephone switch, said call completion data packet further comprising originating phone number of the requester, telephone number of the subscriber and closing prompt codes corresponding to closing prompt messages intended to be provided to said requester.

24. The system in accordance with claim 23, wherein said closing prompt module further comprises a call completion data table that stores information necessary for populating said call completion data packet.

25. A directory assistance system for providing subscriber information to requesters (4) communicating with said assistance system, comprising:  
a telephone switch (12) for receiving calls from a plurality of requesters (4)

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desiring to access said information corresponding to subscribers;

a first database (18) configured to store said information corresponding to each of said subscribers, including phone numbers associated with each of said subscribers;

a communications interface (32) for database clean-up, said interface configured to receive instructions from said subscribers (6) so as to allow said subscribers to modify their corresponding information in said first database (18), wherein said communications interface is coupled to a carrier customer care representative system configured to receive phone calls from said subscribers; and

a carrier clean-up database (30) coupled to said customer care representative system configured to store said modified information received from said subscribers, wherein said communications interface unit (32) further comprising a synchronization technology unit coupled to said clean-up database unit, said synchronization technology unit further coupled to said first database, and configured to synchronize said subscriber modifications with data stored in said first database.

26. The system in accordance with claim 25, further comprising a call center (16) coupled to said switch for routing each of said received calls from said requester to an operator terminal (20).

27. The system in accordance with claim 25, further comprising an operator terminal operated by a customer representative so as to retrieve information stored in said database (18).

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28. The system in accordance with claim 25, further comprising an automated operator terminal (20) so as to automatically retrieve information stored in said database (18).

32. The system in accordance with claim 25, further comprising an Internet clean-up database (34) coupled to said communications interface for receiving and storing modified information received from said subscribers via Internet.

33. The system in accordance with claim 32, wherein said communications interface include a synchronization technology unit so as to synchronize said stored modified data with data stored in said first database.

34. The system in accordance with claim 25, further comprising a reward database (75) configured to store reward information corresponding to a plurality of said subscribers who modified their information.

35. The system in accordance with claim 25, further comprising a master clean-up database (40) coupled to said communications interface unit, configured to receive and store modifications of subscriber information.

36. The system in accordance with claim 35, wherein said communications

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interface comprising a synchronization technology unit coupled to said master clean-up database said synchronization technology unit further coupled to said first database, and configured to synchronize said subscriber modifications with data stored in said first database.

37. The system in accordance with claim 36, further comprising a reward database configured to store reward information corresponding to a plurality of said subscribers who modified their information.

38. A communication assistance system (2) for providing access to information corresponding to a plurality of subscribers, the system comprising:

a telephone switch (12) for receiving calls from a plurality of requesters (4) desiring access to said information corresponding to subscribers (6) ;

a database (18) configured to store said information corresponding to each of said subscribers, including phone numbers of each of said subscribers; and

a dial string translator configured to receive dial strings dialed by said plurality of requesters (4) and translate said received dial strings to a corresponding digit sequence associated with a service provided by said communication assistance system (2).

39. The system in accordance with claim 38, further comprising a call center (16) coupled to said switch for routing each of said received calls from said requester to an operator terminal that has access to said database (18).

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40. The system in accordance with claim 38, further comprising an operator terminal (20) operated by a customer representative, so as to retrieve information stored in said database (18).
41. The system in accordance with claim 38, further comprising an automated operator terminal (20) so as to automatically retrieve information stored in said database (18).
42. The system in accordance with claim 38, wherein said dial string translator generates a digital string within said digit sequence that represents a telephone carrier switching center handling a call made by each one of said requesters.
43. The system in accordance with claim 39, wherein said dial string translator generates a digital string within said digit sequence that represents a specific language to be utilized by said system when communicating with said requester.
44. The system in accordance with claim 43, wherein said call center routes a requester's phone call to an operator terminal handled by a customer representative who is capable of conversing in said specific language.
45. The system in accordance with claim 44, wherein said switch is configured to generate an incoming call information record containing a preferred language code field to store said dial string associated with said specific language.



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46. The system in accordance with claim 45, wherein said call information record further comprises a number dialed by requester field to store the number dialed by each one of said requesters.

47. The system in accordance with claim 46, wherein said call information record further comprises an originating phone number of requester field to store the number from which each one of said requesters has dialed.

48. The system in accordance with claim 43, further comprising a plurality of said call centers (16) remotely connected together via a communications channel, each of said call centers capable of routing a received phone call from each one of said requesters to another one of said call centers (16').

49. The system in accordance with claim 43, wherein said database is searched to retrieve at least one subscriber who communicates in said specific language.

50. A billing system for a communication assistance system (2) that provides access to information corresponding to a plurality of subscribers (6), the system (2) comprising:  
a telephone switch (12) for receiving calls from a plurality of requesters (4) desiring access to said information corresponding to subscribers;  
a database (18) configured to store said information corresponding to each of said

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subscribers (6), including phone numbers of each of said subscribers; and

a billing record database (14) coupled to said switch (12) configured to store information corresponding to amount of time requester (4) was connected to each one of said subscribers (6), wherein said communication assistance system provides instructions to said subscriber's service provider such that said subscriber is not billed for said call.

51. The system in accordance with claim 50, further comprising a call center (16) coupled to said switch for routing each of said received calls from said requester to an operator terminal (20).

52. The system in accordance with claim 50, further comprising an operator terminal operated by a customer representative so as to retrieve information stored in said database (18).

53. The system in accordance with claim 50, further comprising an automated operator terminal (20) so as to automatically retrieve information stored in said database (18).

54. The system in accordance with claim 51, wherein said billing record database coupled to said switch is additionally coupled to said operator terminal.

55. The system in accordance with claim 51, wherein said billing record database further comprises information corresponding to each service provider that respectively

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handled a call between a requester and a subscriber.

56. The system in accordance with claim 55, wherein said billing record database is configured to send information stored relating to billing records to a service provider that handled said call for said requester, so as to bill said requester for charges associated with said call between said requester and said subscriber.

57. The system in accordance with claim 56, wherein said charges include airtime utilized by said subscriber during said call between said requester and said subscriber and directory look-up and connection charges, roaming and toll charges associated with airtime use of said subscriber.

59. The system in accordance with claim 57, wherein telephone number of said subscriber is omitted from said requester's bill.

60. The system in accordance with claim 50, wherein said communication assistance system handles distribution of funds collected by said requester's service provider to said subscriber's service provider.

61. The system in accordance with claim 50, wherein said communication assistance system handles distribution of funds collected by said requester's service provider to all service providers that contributed in handling said call between said requester and said

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subscriber.

62. The system in accordance with claim 61, wherein said subscriber's service provider for handling said call to said subscriber is also said requester's wireless carrier.

63. A communication assistance system (2) for providing access to information corresponding to a plurality of subscribers (6), the system comprising:

a telephone switch (12) for receiving calls from a plurality of requesters desiring to access said information corresponding to subscribers (6);

a listing database (18) configured to store said information corresponding to each of said subscribers, including phone numbers of each of said subscribers and a connect field that stores information instructing said communication assistance system as to whether to disclose a subscriber's phone number to a requester (4); and

a call center(16) coupled to said switch for routing each of said received calls from said requester to an operator terminal (20) that has access to said database listing table (18), wherein said connect field further comprises information instructing said communication assistance system (2) as to whether to disclose said subscriber's (6) phone number to a customer representative who is handling a request from a requester (4).

65. The system in accordance with claim 63, further comprising a plurality of said call centers (16) remotely connected together via a communications channel, each of said call centers capable of routing a received phone call from each one of said requesters to another

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one of said call centers (16).

66. The system in accordance with claim 63, wherein said operator terminal is operated by a customer representative.

67. The system in accordance with claim 63, wherein said operator terminal is automated.

69. The system in accordance with claim 63, wherein said listing database further comprises a pre-announcement field (59) that contains instruction information as to whether a subscriber requires to be notified of a requester's identification information before completing a call from said requester to said subscriber.

70. The system in accordance with claim 69, wherein said communications assistance system further comprises means to receive instructions from said subscriber as to whether to accept a call originated from said requester.

71. The system in accordance with claim 69, wherein said communications assistance system further comprises means to receive instructions from said subscriber as to whether to reject a call originated from said requester.

72. The system in accordance with claims 71, wherein said communications

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assistance system further comprises a means to receive instructions from said subscriber to direct a call from a requester directly to said subscriber's voicemail.

73. The system in accordance with claim 71, wherein said communication assistance system further comprises a means to store in said listing database instructions from said subscriber to permanently reject all incoming calls from said individual requester.

74. The system in accordance with claim 71, or 72 or 73 wherein said communication assistance system provides an automated response to said requester, when said call is rejected by said subscriber.

75. The system in accordance with claim 71, or 72 or 73 wherein said communication assistance system delivers a pre-recorded response to said requester, recorded by said subscriber, when said call is rejected by said subscriber.

76. A communication assistance system (2) for providing access to information corresponding to a plurality of subscribers, the system comprising:

a telephone switch (12) for receiving calls from a plurality of requesters (4) desiring to access said information corresponding to subscribers (6);

a listing database (18) configured to store said information corresponding to each of said subscribers, including phone numbers of each of said subscribers; and

a processor configured to electronically transmit notification messages to said

subscribers so as to receive updates for each listing corresponding to each one of said

subscribers, wherein said notification messages are transmitted via a plurality of communication channels from a list including voice and data channels, WAP, SMS, instant messaging and live chat.

77. The system in accordance with claim 76, further comprising a call center (16) coupled to said switch for routing each of said received calls from said requester to an operator terminal (20) that has access to said listing database (18).

78. The system in accordance with claim 76, further comprising an operator terminal operated by a customer representative so as to retrieve information stored in said database (18).

79. The system in accordance with claim 76, further comprising an automated operator terminal so as to automatically retrieve information stored in said database (18).

80. The system in accordance with claim 76, wherein said notification messages to said subscribers is transmitted after a designated period lapsed since a prior notification message.

81. The system is accordance with claim 76, wherein said listing updates are received via Internet.

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82. The system in accordance with claim 76, wherein said processor transmits said notification messages in response to a listing error discovered in said listing database.

83. The system in accordance with claim 76, further comprising a service provider (26) configured to handle calls made by a plurality of said subscribers, said service provider transmitting modification messages to said telephone switch corresponding to changes associated with said directory listing of each of said subscribers.

84. The system in accordance with claim 76, further comprising a communication interface unit configured to receive modification signals from said subscribers so as to modify said directory listing corresponding to each one of said subscribers.

85. The system in accordance with claim 84, wherein said modification messages corresponding to each of said subscribers are transmitted via a plurality of communication channels from a list including voice and data channels, WAP, SMS, instant messaging and live chat.

86. The system in accordance with claim 84, further comprising a reward database configured to track rewards offered to each one of said subscribers who modify a corresponding one of said directory listing.



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87. The system in accordance with claim 84, further comprising a Voice Response Unit configured to receive phone calls from said subscribers who modify a corresponding one of said directory listing in response to prompts provided by said Voice Response Unit.

88. The system in accordance with claim 87, wherein said Voice Response Unit is configured to record responses made by said subscribers who modify a corresponding one of said directory listing via interaction with a customer representative.

90. The system in accordance with claim 76, further comprising a second database comprising personal contact listings of each one of said subscribers.

91. The system in accordance with claim 90, wherein said processor populates said first database with information contained in said second database.

92. A communication assistance system (2) for providing access to information corresponding to a plurality of subscribers, the system comprising:

- a telephone switch (12) for receiving calls from a plurality of requesters (4) desiring to access said information corresponding to subscribers (6);
- a first database (18) configured to store said information corresponding to each of said subscribers, including phone numbers of each of said subscribers (6); and
- a communications interface (32) for database clean-up, said interface configured

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to receive instructions from said subscribers (6) so as to allow said subscribers to modify their corresponding information in said first database (18), said information including the license plate number corresponding to said subscriber's vehicle, said modified information being searchable by said system (2) so as to provide a desired information of a subscriber (6) to said requester (4), via said telephone switch (12), wherein said communications interface is coupled to a carrier customer care representative system configured to receive phone calls from said subscribers; and

a carrier clean-up database (30) coupled to said customer care representative system configured to store said modified information received from said subscribers, wherein said communications interface unit (32) further comprising a synchronization technology unit coupled to said clean-up database unit, said synchronization technology unit further coupled to said first database, and configured to synchronize said subscriber modifications with data stored in said first database.

93. The system in accordance with claim 92, further comprising a call center (16) coupled to said switch for routing each of said received calls from said requester to an operator terminal (20).

94. The system in accordance with claim 92, further comprising an operator terminal (20) operated by a customer representative so as to retrieve information stored in said database (18).

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95. The system in accordance with claim 92, further comprising an automated operator terminal so as to automatically retrieve information stored in said database (18).

96. The system in accordance with claim 92, further comprising a processor for searching said first database against said license plate number so as to retrieve other information stored corresponding to each of said subscribers.

97. A communication assistance system (2) for providing access to information corresponding to a plurality of subscribers (6), the system comprising:

a telephone switch (12) for receiving calls from a plurality of requesters (4) desiring to access said information corresponding to subscribers; and

a database directory listing (18) storing information corresponding to each one of said subscribers, said information including a Pre-Announcement field containing information indicating whether a requester is pre-announced before a voice connection to a subscriber is made.

98. The system in accordance with claim 97, further comprising a call center (16) coupled to said switch for routing each of said received calls from said requester to an operator terminal (20).

99. The system in accordance with claim 97, further comprising an operator terminal (20) operated by a customer representative, so as to retrieve information stored in said

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database (18).

100. The system in accordance with claim 97, further comprising an automated operator terminal (20) so as to automatically retrieve information stored in said database (18).

101. The system in accordance with claim 170, wherein said special services include indication that a service is open 24 hours.

102. The system in accordance with claim 170, wherein said special services include indication that a service provides Spanish speaking personnel.

103. The system in accordance with claim 170, wherein said special services include indication that a service provides hearing impaired compatible information.

104. The system in accordance with claim 97, wherein said database directory listing further comprises a Device Capability field associated with capabilities of a wireless device corresponding to each one of said subscribers.

105. The system in accordance with claim 97, wherein said database directory listing further comprises a Defined Locality field associated with a subscriber's preferred locality.

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106. The system in accordance with claim 97, wherein said database directory listing further comprises a Billing Information field associated with information corresponding with each one of said subscribers.

107. The system in accordance with claim 106 wherein said Billing Information field contains instructions associated with whether a requester or a subscriber is responsible for the billing on calls made by a requester to a subscriber.

108. The system in accordance with claim 97, wherein said database directory listing includes a NPA/NXX field containing information indicating whether a requester is calling from a wireless device or a landline device.

110. The system in accordance with claim 97, wherein said pre-announcement to said subscriber is in voice format.

111. The system in accordance with claim 97, wherein said pre-announcement to said subscriber is in text format.

112. The system in accordance with claim 97, wherein said Pre-Announcement field is defaulted to inactive when said requester is calling for a landline device and said Pre-Announcement field is defaulted to active when said requester is calling for a wireless device.

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113. The system in accordance with claim 97, wherein said pre-announcement is made to a subscriber via audio and visual messages depending on said subscriber's preference.

114. The system in accordance with claim 97, further comprising a Voice Response Unit for storing pre-announcement messages that are played in accordance with information contained in said Pre-Announcement field.

115. The system in accordance with claim 114, wherein said Voice Response Unit stores a requester's message so as to announce said requester to a desired subscriber for acceptance of a call from said requester by said subscriber.

116. The system in accordance with claim 115, wherein said requester is prompted to leave a voice message, when said requester's call to said subscriber is not accepted.

117. A communication assistance system (2) for providing access to information corresponding to a plurality of subscribers (6), the system comprising:

a telephone switch (12) for receiving calls from a plurality of requesters (4) desiring to access said information corresponding to subscribers (6); and

a database directory listing (18) storing information corresponding to each one of said subscribers, said information including a Rate Plan field associated with billing rates corresponding to each one of said subscribers.

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118. The system in accordance with claim 117, further comprising a call center (16) coupled to said switch for routing each of said received calls from said requester to an operator terminal (20).

119. The system in accordance with claim 117, further comprising an operator terminal (20) operated by a customer representative so as to retrieve information stored in said database (18).

120. The system in accordance with claim 117, further comprising an automated operator terminal (20) so as to automatically retrieve information stored in said database (18).

121. The system in accordance with claim 117, wherein said Rate Plan field further comprises information relating to billing charges corresponding to various features associated with each one of said subscribers.

122. A communication assistance system (2) for providing access to information corresponding to a plurality of subscribers (6), the system comprising:

a telephone switch (12) for receiving calls from a plurality of requesters (4) desiring access to said information corresponding to subscribers wherein said switch is configured to generate an incoming call information record containing a Feature Code field associated with a subscription rate plan corresponding to service provider rates for each one of

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said requesters (4) ; and

a database (18) accessible by an operator terminal and configured to store said information corresponding to each of said subscribers, including phone numbers of each of said subscribers.

123. The system in accordance with claim 122, further comprising a call center (16) coupled to said switch for routing each of said received calls from said requester to an operator terminal (20).

124. The system in accordance with claim 122, further comprising an operator terminal (20) operated by a customer representative so as to retrieve information stored in said database (18).

125. The system in accordance with claim 122, further comprising an automated operator terminal (20) so as to automatically retrieve information stored in said database (18).

126. The system in accordance with claim 122, wherein said subscription rate plan includes a flat fee subscription fee corresponding to various features and services provided by said system.

127. The system in accordance with claim 126, wherein said flat fee varies



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depending on the type of services subscribed by the requester from their service provider.

133. A communication assistance system (2) for providing access to information corresponding to a plurality of subscribers (6), the system comprising:

- a telephone switch (12) for receiving calls from a plurality of requesters (4) desiring to access said information corresponding to subscribers (6);
- a first database (18) configured to store said information corresponding to each of said subscribers, including phone numbers of each of said subscribers;
- a communications interface for receiving requests for directory assistance via a requester computer terminal; and
- an access database (19) containing a plurality of access numbers corresponding to phone listing of each one of said subscribers stored in said first database (18), so as to provide an assigned access number to a requester who is requesting a subscriber's telephone number, such that said requester (4) can connect to said subscribers (6) using said assigned access number.

134. The system in accordance with claim 133, further comprising a call center coupled to said switch for routing each of said received calls from said requester to an operator terminal.

135. The system in accordance with claim 133, further comprising an operator terminal (20) operated by a customer representative so as to retrieve information stored in said

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database (18).

136. The system in accordance with claim 133, further comprising an automated operator terminal (20) so as to automatically retrieve information from said database (18).

137. The system in accordance with claim 133, further comprising means to provide said assigned access number to a communication terminal employed by said requester.

138. The system in accordance with claim 133, wherein said assigned access number when dialed provides access to said telephone switch and said access database, so as to retrieve a corresponding subscriber's phone number for call completion by said telephone switch.

139. The system in accordance with claim 138, wherein said communication terminal employed by said requester is a wireless handheld device.

140. The system in accordance with claim 138, wherein said communication terminal employed by said requester is a personal computer.

141. A communication assistance system (2) for providing access to information corresponding to a plurality of subscribers, the system comprising:

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a telephone switch (12) for receiving calls from a plurality of requesters (4)

desiring to access said information corresponding to subscribers (6);

a listing database (18) coupled to an operator terminal and configured to store said information corresponding to each of said subscribers, including phone numbers of each of said subscribers; and

a processor configured to electronically transmit notification messages to an outbound telemarketing unit for obtaining listing updates for a plurality of subscribers designated by said processor, wherein said notification messages are transmitted via a plurality of communication channels from a list including voice and data channels, WAP, SMA, instant messaging and live chat.

142. The system in accordance with claim 141, further comprising a call center (16) coupled to said switch for routing each of said received calls from said requester to an operator terminal (20).

143. The system in accordance with claim 141, further comprising an operator terminal (20) operated by a customer representative to retrieve information stored in said database (18).

144. The system in accordance with claim 141, further comprising an automated operator terminal (20) so as to automatically retrieve information from said database (18).

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145. The system in accordance with claim 141, wherein said notification messages are transmitted when listings for said subscribers have not been updated for a period of time.

146. The system in accordance with claim 141, wherein said notification messages are transmitted when listings for said subscribers are incomplete.

147. The system in accordance with claim 141, wherein said notification messages are transmitted when listings for said subscribers are assigned to a group representative for a group of subscribers.

148. The system in accordance with claim 141, further comprising a service provider corresponding to said subscribers, said service provider including a database for maintaining listing data corresponding to each subscriber and said service provider further comprising means for providing notification messages corresponding to status of accounts of said subscribers.

149. The system in accordance with claim 148 wherein said status of accounts corresponds to activation, deactivation and modification of said accounts.

150. A communication assistance system (2) for providing access to

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information corresponding to a plurality of subscribers (6), the system comprising:

a telephone switch (12) for receiving calls from a plurality of requesters (4)

desiring to access said information corresponding to subscribers;

a first database (18) coupled to an operator terminal (20) and configured to store said information corresponding to each of said subscribers, including phone numbers associated with each of said subscribers;

a communications interface for database clean-up, said interface configured to receive instructions from said subscribers so as to allow said subscribers to modify their corresponding information in said first database wherein said communications interface is coupled to a carrier customer care representative system configured to receive phone calls from said subscribers;

a carrier clean-up database (30) coupled to said customer care representative system configured to store said modified information received from said subscribers, wherein said communications interface unit (32) further comprising a synchronization technology unit coupled to said clean-up database unit, said synchronization technology unit further coupled to said first database, and configured to synchronize said subscriber modifications with data stored in said first database; and

a processor configured to electronically transmit notification messages to said subscribers so as to receive updates for each listing corresponding to each one of said subscribers, wherein said notification messages are transmitted via a plurality of communication channels from a list including voice and data channels, WAP, SMA, instant messaging and live chat.

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151. A communication assistance system (2) for providing access to information corresponding to a plurality of subscribers (6), the system comprising:

a telephone switch (12) for receiving calls from a plurality of requesters (4) desiring access to said information corresponding to subscribers;

a database directory listing (18) storing information corresponding to each one of said subscribers including their phone numbers, said information including a Pre-Announcement field containing information indicating whether a requester is pre-announced before a voice connection to a subscriber is made; and

a dial string translator configured to receive dial strings dialed by each one of said plurality of requesters and translate said received dial strings to a corresponding digit sequence associated with a service provided by said communication assistance system.

152. A billing system for a communication assistance system that provides access to information corresponding to a plurality of subscribers (6), the system comprising:

a telephone switch (12) for receiving calls from a plurality of requesters (4) desiring access to said information corresponding to subscribers wherein said switch is configured to generate an incoming call information record containing a Feature Code field associated with a subscription rate plan corresponding to service provider rates for each one of said requesters (4); and

a database directory listing storing information corresponding to each one of said subscribers including their phone number, said information including a Rate Plan field

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associated with billing rates corresponding to each one of said subscribers; and

a billing record database (14) coupled to said switch (12) configured to store information corresponding to amount of time requester (4) was connected to each one of said subscribers (6), wherein said communication assistance system provides instructions to said subscriber's service provider such that said subscriber is not billed for said call.

153. A communication assistance system for providing access to information corresponding to a plurality of subscribers (6), the system comprising:

a telephone switch (12) for receiving calls from a plurality of requesters desiring to access said information corresponding to subscribers;

a first database (18) coupled to an operator terminal (20) and configured to store said information corresponding to each of said subscribers, including phone numbers of each of said subscribers;

a call completion table coupled to said telephone switch said call completion table containing least cost routing information for connecting said requesters to a desired subscriber; and

a closing prompt module coupled to said first database so as to generate a closing prompt code from a plurality of available closing prompt codes associated with a desired closing prompt message for said requesters.

154. A method of operating a communication assistance system for providing access to information corresponding to a plurality of subscribers, said method comprising the

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steps of:

receiving calls from a plurality of a requesters desiring to access said information corresponding to subscribers at a telephone switch;

accessing a first database and retrieving said information corresponding to a subscriber, including phone numbers of each of said subscribers; and

selecting a closing prompt code from a plurality of available closing prompt codes wherein each one of said closing prompt codes is associated with a desired closing prompt message so as to provide a selected closing prompt message, wherein anyone of the available closing prompt messages is provided to a requester.

155. A method of operating a communication assistance system for providing access to information corresponding to a plurality of subscribers, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving calls from a plurality of a requesters desiring to access said information corresponding to subscribers at a telephone switch;

accessing a first database and retrieving said information corresponding to a subscriber, including phone numbers of each of said subscribers;

receiving instructions at a clean-up interface coupled to a customer care representative system from said subscribers so as to allow said subscribers to modify their corresponding information in said first database;

storing said modified information received from said subscriber in a carrier clean-up database coupled to said customer care representative system; and



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synchronizing said subscriber modifications with data stored in said first database via a synchronization technology unit coupled to said clean-up database unit and said first database.

156. A method of operating a communication assistance system for providing access to information corresponding to a plurality of subscribers, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving calls from a plurality of requesters desiring to access said information corresponding to subscribers at a telephone switch;

accessing a first database and retrieving said information corresponding to a subscriber, including phone numbers of each of said subscribers; and

receiving dial strings dialed by each one of said plurality of requesters and translating said received dial strings to a corresponding digit sequence associated with a service provided by said communication assistance system.

157. A method of operating a billing system for a communication assistance system that provides access to information corresponding to a plurality of subscribers, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving calls from a plurality of requesters desiring to access said information corresponding to subscribers at a telephone switch;

accessing a first database and retrieving said information corresponding to a subscriber, including phone numbers of each of said subscribers;

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storing information corresponding to said requester accessing said information and an amount of time said requester was connected to each one of said subscribers in a billing record database; and

instructing said subscriber's service provider not to bill said subscriber or said call.

158. A method of operating a communication assistance system for providing access to information corresponding to a plurality of subscribers, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving calls from a plurality of a requesters desiring to access said information corresponding to subscribers at a telephone switch; and

storing information in a listing database, corresponding to each of said subscribers, including phone numbers of each of said subscribers and instructions in a connect field as to whether to disclose a subscriber's phone number to a requester.

159. A method of operating a communication assistance system for providing access to information corresponding to a plurality of subscribers, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving calls from a plurality of a requesters desiring to access said information corresponding to subscribers at a telephone switch;

storing information corresponding to each of said subscribers, including phone numbers of each of said subscribers ; and

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electronically transmitting via a plurality of communication channels from a list including voice and data channels, WAP, SMS, instant messaging and live chat notification messages to said subscribers so as to receive updates for each listing corresponding to each one of said subscribers.

160. A method of operating a communication assistance system for providing access to information corresponding to a plurality of subscribers, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving calls from a plurality of a requesters desiring to access said information corresponding to subscribers at a telephone switch;

storing information corresponding to each of said subscribers, including phone numbers of each of said subscribers and license plate number corresponding to said subscriber's vehicle in a first database coupled to an operator terminal; and

receiving instructions at a clean-up database from said subscribers so as to allow said subscribers to modify their corresponding information in said first database.

161. A method of operating a communication assistance system for providing access to information corresponding to a plurality of subscribers, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving calls from a plurality of a requesters desiring to access said information corresponding to subscribers at a telephone switch; and

storing information corresponding to each one of said subscribers in a database

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directory listing, said information including a Pre-Announcement field containing information indicating whether a requester is pre-announced before a voice connection to a subscriber is made.

162. A method of operating a communication assistance system for providing access to information corresponding to a plurality of subscribers, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving calls from a plurality of a requesters desiring to access said information corresponding to subscribers at a telephone switch; and

storing information corresponding to each one of said subscribers in a database directory listing, said information including a Rate Plan field associated with billing rates corresponding to each one of said subscribers.

163. A method of operating a communication assistance system for providing access to information corresponding to a plurality of subscribers, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving calls from a plurality of a requesters desiring to access said information corresponding to subscribers at a telephone switch;

generating an incoming call information record containing a Feature Code field associated with a subscription rate plan corresponding to service provider rates for each one of said requesters; and

accessing a first database and retrieving said information corresponding to each

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of said subscribers, including phone numbers of each of said subscribers.

165. A method of operating a communication assistance system for providing access to information corresponding to a plurality of subscribers, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving calls from a plurality of a requesters desiring to access said information corresponding to subscribers at a telephone switch;

accessing a first database and retrieving said information corresponding to each of said subscribers, including phone numbers of each of said subscribers;

receiving requests for directory assistance via a requester communication device;

and

maintaining a plurality of access numbers corresponding to phone listing of each one of said subscribers stored in said first database in an access database, so as to provide an assigned access number to a requester who is requesting a subscriber's telephone number, wherein said assigned access number disclosed to said requester is associated with subscriber's undisclosed telephone number, such that said requester can connect to said subscriber using said assigned access number.

166. A method of operating a communication assistance system for providing access to information corresponding to a plurality of subscribers, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving calls from a plurality of a requesters desiring to access said information

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corresponding to subscribers at a telephone switch;

storing information corresponding to each of said subscribers including phone numbers of each of said subscribers; and

electronically transmitting notification messages to an outbound telemarketing unit for obtaining listing updates for a plurality of subscribers.

167. A communication assistance system (2) for providing access to information corresponding to a plurality of subscribers (6), the system comprising:

a telephone switch (12) for receiving calls from a plurality of requesters (4) desiring to access said information corresponding to subscribers (6);

a first database (18) configured to store said information corresponding to each of said subscribers (6), including phone numbers of each of said subscribers;

a voice response unit coupled to said first database configured to retrieve information from said first database in response to voice commands received from said requesters; and

a closing prompt module (27) coupled to said first database so as to generate a closing prompt code from a plurality of available closing prompt codes associated with desired closing prompt messages for said requesters(4).

168. The system according to claim 167, wherein said closing prompt messages are in accordance with a text format from a list of formats including WAP and SMS.

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169. The system in accordance with claim 167, wherein said database further comprises a listing table 52(A) associated with each of said subscribers, said listing table further comprises a wireless phone number field adapted to store wireless phone numbers of said subscribers.

170. The system in accordance with claim 97, wherein said database directory listing further maintains a Special Services field associated with services provided by said subscriber, so as to allow a search of said database against any one of said services.

171. The system in accordance with claim 1, wherein said closing prompt module selects said closing prompt code, from any one of said available closing prompt codes, relating to a subscriber information other than the subscriber information requested by said requester.

172. The system in accordance with claim 1, wherein said closing prompt module selects said closing prompt code based on any one of; the number dialed by said requester, the data source, the types of data, the services requested, the preferred language of the requester, and the NPA/NXX of the destination number.